

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LUBUMB 00525 01 OF 02 211004Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 PC-01 AID-05 SCS-06
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05
A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 /125 W
-----071965 211026Z /11

O 210915Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
TO SECSTATE IMMEDIATE 2404
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USICA WASHDC
USCINCEUR
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USINT HAVANA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 LUBUMBASHI 0525

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS MOPS CG
SUBJ: VISIT TO KOLWEZI ON MAY 20

1. SUMMARY: VICE CONSUL ACCOMPANIED AMERICAN MISSIONARY PILOT
AND HEAD OF BELGIAN MEDICAL MISSION ON VISIT TO KOLWEZI ON MAY 20.
HE SPENT FIVE HOURS TOURING THE CITY AND TALKING WITH MILITARY
OFFICERS (MOSTLY BELGIAN) AND REFUGEES WAITING FOR EVACUATION
PLANES. END SUMMARY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LUBUMB 00525 01 OF 02 211004Z

2. MILITARY ACTIVITIES: AS AIRCRAFT LANDED, SCATTERED PUFFS OF
SMOKE AT EDGE OF WESTERN SECTION (OLD CITY) INDICATED SHOOTING IN
THESE AREAS. UNCLEAR IF ACTUAL COMBAT GOING ON, OR FRENCH LEGION-
AIRES SIMPPY FIRING AT RANDOM. AT 1300 LOCAL TIME, FEW FRENCH
SOLDIERS IN EVIDENCE AND BELGIAN SOLDIERS STATIONED IN STRONG-
HOLD ON ROAD FROM AIRPORT TO BELGIAN SCHOOL (LYCEE JEAN XXIII)

IN SOUTHEASTERN PORTION OF OLD CITY. BELGIAN COLONEL, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF GROUND TROOPS, TOLD VICE CONSUL THAT BELGIAN MILITARY ACTIVITIES WERE DIRECTED SOLELY TOWARD THE SAFE AND ORDERLY EVACUATION OF ANY AND ALL NON-AFRICAN NATIONALS AND AS MANY ZAIRIANS AS SPACE ALLOWED. BELGIAN COLONEL SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THESE ORDERS APPLIED TO THE FRENCH, NONE OF WHOM WERE INVOLVED IN EVACUATION EFFORT. OBVIOUS ANIMOSITY BETWEEN FRENCH SOLDIERS AND BELGIAN SOLDIERS PRESENT AT THE FEW OCCASIONS VICE CONSUL WITNESSED ENCOUNTERS. BELGIAN GENERALLY CONTEMPTUOUS OF FRENCH PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THEIR OPERATION.

3. ACCORDING TO ONE BELGIAN LIEUTENANT, WHO WAS AMONG THE FIRST BELGIAN MILITARY TO ARRIVE IN KOLWEZI MORNING OF MAY 20, FRENCH PARADROP ON THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 19 WAS NEAR DISASTER. ACCORDING TO BELGIAN, FIRST 120 FRENCH PARATROOPERS WERE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDED BY REBEL FORCES AND SPENT A LONG NIGHT ASKING FOR REINFORCEMENTS WHICH DID NOT COME. BELGIAN LIEUTENANT SAID BELGIAN'S MONITORING RADIO AT KAMINA BASE SAID THE FRENCH WERE "SCREAMING LIKE SKUNKS (PUTOIS)" FOR REINFORCEMENTS. FOUR C-130S WHICH HAD ARRIVED LUBUMBASHI NIGHT OF MAY 19 HAD BEEN INTENDED TO BE SECOND WAVE OF PARADROP AT KOLWEZI BUT ARRIVED TOO LATE. FORTUNATELY FOR FRENCH, REBELS WERE CONTENT TO KEEP FIRST WAVE NEUTRALIZED WHILE THEY (REBELS) MADE GOOD THEIR ESCAPE. SEVERAL BELGIAN MILITARY OFFICERS OFFERED OPINION THAT HASTINESS OF FRENCH EFFORT WAS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN HIGH NUMBER OF EXPATRIATE CASUALTIES. SEVERAL CIVILIAN EXPATRIATES TOLD CONSULAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LUBUMB 00525 01 OF 02 211004Z

OFFICER THAT ALL WAS QUIET ON THURSDAY, MAY 18 AND FRIDAY MAY 19 UNTIL FRENCH PARADROP. CIVILIANS BELIEVE INVADERS BEGAN PULLING BACK THAT MORNING AND THAT ONLY RESISTANCE FRENCH FIRST WAVE MET WAS REAR-GUARD ACTION.

4. BELGIANS NOW CONTROL AIRPORT, "NEW CITY", AND MOST OF OLD CITY". FRENCH HOLDING STRONG POINT ALONG RAILROAD AND MAKING SWEEPS OF AFRICAN RESIDENTIAL AREAS (CITES). BELGIANS HAVE REPLACED FRENCH IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS. ONE DEAD EUROPEAN NEAR IMPLA MOTEL REPORTEDLY KILLED BY LEGIONAIRES. REPORTS OF FRENCH LEGIONAIRES FIRING ON EUROPEANS OR ANYTHING MOVING MORNING OF MAY 20 BEING CIRCULATED. FAZ SOLDIERS TO BE SEEN ONLY AT AIRPORT AND ON ROAD TO TOWN JUST OUTSIDE AIRPORT. NO FAZ IN TOWN.

5. THE ATTACK ON MAY 13. RESIDENTS REPORTED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SHOOTING AT TIME OF ATTACK, BUT FEW SIGNS OF BATTLE, EXCEPT AT QUARTIER GENERAL. FOR THE MOST PART THE FAZ TROOPS RETREATED AT THE FIRST SIGN OF ATTACK. THE ZAIRIAN POPULATION OF KOLWEZI

IS THOUGHT TO HAVE SIDED WITH THE INVADERS AND PARTICIPATED IN SOME LOoting, NOT SO MUCH OUT OF SYMPATHY BUT BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION TO MOBUTU, AND ENVY OF WEALTH WHICH SURROUNDED THEM BUT WHICH

THEY DID NOT SHARE.

6. EX-KATANGANS HAVE APPARENTLY ESCAPED, SOME IN AN ORGANIZED MANNER AND OTHERS MELTING INTO THE CITES. BELGIAN COLONEL REPORTS THAT REBELS RETREATED WESTWARD TOWARD MUTSHATSHA. ALTHOUGH BELGIANS PLAN TO STAY AT KOLWEZI NO LONGER THAN 72 HOURS AND HAVE NO PLANS TO PURSUE INVADERS, BELGIAN COLONEL INDICATED THAT FRENCH APPARENTLY HAVE ORDERS TO REMAIN LONGER.

7. EVIDENCE OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT: VICE CONSUL RECEIVED NO REPORTS OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT, BUT DID SEE TWO BEARDED, LONG-HAIRED MEN DRESSED IN FATIGUES IN THE BACK OF FRENCH MILITARY VEHICLE WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN CUBAN PRISONERS. MOST REFUGEES SAID THEY HID IN THEIR HOUSES AND SAW NOBODY. GECAMINES REPORTED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 LUBUMB 00525 01 OF 02 211004Z

SOME OF THEIR EMPLOYEES CLAIMED THERE HAD BEEN CUBANS AMONG THE FIRST

WAVE ON MAY 13, BUT THEY HAD FLED UPON THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF PARATROOP INTERVENTION. ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCES, ONCE THE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LUBUMB 00525 02 OF 02 211015Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 PC-01 AID-05 SCS-06 HA-05

A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 /125 W

-----072015 211025Z /11

O 210915Z MAY 78

FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

TO SECSTATE IMMEDIATE 2405

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

DIA WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC
USICA WASHDC
USCINCEUR
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USINT HAVANA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 LUBUMBASHI 0525

CUBANS HAD LEFT, DISCIPLINE AMONG THE INVADERS
COLLAPSED COMPLETELY.

8. CIVILIAN CASUALTIES: RELIABLE REPORT INDICATES
THAT ABOUT FORTY EUROPEANS WERE MASSACRED BY EX-KATANGANS
ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17 AT ONE LOCATION. EXPATRIATES
WERE GATHERED BY FAZ FROM AREA IN "NEW CITY" WEST OF
MILITARY REGION COMMAND POST AND PLACED IN
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LUBUMB 00525 02 OF 02 211015Z

BUILDING NEAR GECAMINES MESS. ON WEDNESDAY, GAZ
ABANDONED COMMAND POST ("QUARTIER GENERAL") AND
INVADERS TOOK REFUGEE BUILDING. EXPATRIATES, INCLUDING
WOMEN AND CHILDREN, WERE MACHINE-GUNNED. REPORT ORIGINATES
WITH TWO EXPATRIATES WHO, SUSPECTING IMPENDING MASSACRE,
HID THEMSELVES IN THE RAFTERS OF THE BUILDING'S CELING.
BELGIAN COLONEL HAS VERIFIED THAT AT LEAST THIRTY-SEVEN
BODIES OF EUROPEANS WERE FOUND IN THAT SINGLE LOCATION.
OTHER REPORTS INDICATED THAT REBELS WERE MORE HOSTILE
TO GROUPS OF WHITES ASSEMBLED IN ONE PLACE THAN TO
INDIVIDUALS OR SMALL FACILIES. FOR THE MOST PART KILLING
SEEMED TO BE RANDOM RATHER THAN DIRECTED AT ANY NATIONAL-
ITY OR ECONOMIC GROUP.

9. CONSULATE OFFICER SAW AT LEAST THREE WHITE BODIES IN
OR NEAR STREET BETWEEN AIRPORT AND BELGIAN SCHOOL. BELGIAN
MILITARY REPORTS THAT SINGLE WHITE CORPSES, MOSTLY OF
MEN, CONTINUE TO BE FOUND IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS. GECAMINES
DOCTOR SAID HE HAD SEEN SIXTY EUROPEAN DEAD.
TOTAL EUROPEAN DEAD WILL PROBABLY NUMBER ABOUT ONE
HUNDRED.
CONSULATE OFFICER SAW NO BODIES OF ZAIRIAN CIVILIANS,
BUT WAS TOLD THAT SUCH BODIES IN EVIDENCE ON SIDE
STREETS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

10. MILITARY CASUALTIES: GECAMINES DOCTOR ESTIMATED
FAZ DEAD AT HOSPITAL AT ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE. CONSULATE
OFFICER SAW ABOUT 12 TO 15 BODIES OF AFRICANS, MOST
OF WHOM WERE DRESSED IN FATIGUES AND PRESUMABLY WERE

FAZ. VERY LITTLE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON EX-KATANGAN
LOSSES, BUT APPARENTLY THEY WERE SLIGHT. FRENMP APPA-
RENTLY SUFFERED SOME LOSSES IN MAY 19 PARADROP.
CONSULATE OFFICER SAW SEVERAL PARACHUTES HUNG IN THREES
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LUBUMB 00525 02 OF 02 211015Z

NEAR IMPALA HOTEL AND BRIDGE CONNECTING "OLD CITY"
WITH "NEW CITY". BELGIAN MILITARY REPORTS NO CASUALTIES.

11. EVACUATION OPERATIONS: BELGIAN MILITARY OPERATING
CONTINUOUS SHUTTLE OF C-130S FROM KOLWEZI TO KAMINA.
BELGIANS PLAN TO CONTINUE NIGHT OPERATIONS BY
UTILIZING AUTOMOBILES TO LIGHT AIRPORT. BELGIANS ARE
GIVING PREFERENCE TO EUROPEANS. FEW ZAIRIANS HAVE
BEEN EVACUATED. SOME FLIGHTS BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO
EUROPEANS WHO WISH EVACUATION TO LUBUMBASHI RATHER THAN
KINSHASA VIA KAMINA. BELGIANS ARE ALSO DISTRIBUTING FOOD
AND SOFT DRINKS, MOSTLY TO ZAIRIANS.

12. BELGIANS FLEW IN FOUR TONS OF MEDICINES TO LUBUMBASHI
MORNING OF MAY 20. MEDICAL ATTACHE TO BELGIAN EMBASSY/
KINSHASA TOLD CONSULATE OFFICER THAT LUBUMBASHI FACILITIES
PREPARED TO RECEIVE 100-150 SERIOUSLY WOUNDED FOR THREE-
FOUR DAYS. 15-30 SERIOUSLY WOUNDED EXPECTED TO BE
EVACUATED FROM KOLWEZI MAY 20.

13. POLITICAL: PRESIDENT MOBUTU MADE BRIEF APPEARANCE
IN KOLWEZI AFTERNOON OF MAY 20 IN COMPANY OF
SEVERAL WESTERN JOURNALISTS. MOBUTU IGNORED BY BELGIAN
MILITARY AND EVACUEES. ACCORDING TO BELGIAN OFFICER, MOBUTU
DID NOT VENTURE BEYOND BRIDGE CONNECTING TWO PORTIONS
OF THE CITY.

14. PSYCHOLOGICAL: THE AMBIENCE IN KOLWEZI IS ONE OF
A TOWN STRUCK BY A MASSIVE NATURAL DISASTER. HUNDREDS
OF EUROPEAN REFUGEES CLOG THE AIRPORT AND THE BELGIAN
SCHOOL AND THEIR FACES CARRY LOOKS WHICH RANGE FROM
GRIM RESOLUTION TO OPEN DESPAIR. ALMOST ALL OF THEM SEEM
TO HAVE SOME STORY OF THE WAY A RELATIVE OR FRIEND WAS
KILLED. A FEW ARE IN SHOCK AND HAVE TO BE PHYSICALLY
AND EMOTIONALLY SUPPORTED BY THEIR COMPANIONS. CLUTCHING
SMALL CHILDREN, SUITCASES, RADIOS, AND PETS, MANY STAND
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 LUBUMB 00525 02 OF 02 211015Z

OR SIT SAYING LITTLE, THEIR SILENCE ONLY BROKEN BY SHOUTS
OF RECOGNITION WHEN A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR IS SEEN. THE

CITY IS ALMOST A GHOST TOWN, AND WHISTE THERE ARE FEW
SIGNS OF GREAT DESTRUCTION, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SOMETHING
IS DRASTICALLY WRONG. WRECKED, ABANDONED, OR SHOT-UP
VEHICLES PUNCTUATE THE EMPTY STREET AND PILFERED AND CAST-OFF
PERSONAL BELONGINGS ARE SCATTERED ALONG THE
SIDEWALKS. ON THE WESTERN APPROACH TO THE CENTRAL BRIDGE
THERE IS AN ABANDONED PANHARD ARMORED CAR WITH THE BLOATED
AND ROTTING BODIES OF AFRICAN SOLDIERS STREWN AROUND IT IN
A GRISLY ARRAY. SOME BUILDINGS, SUCH AS THE IMPALA MOTEL
AND THE POST OFFICE BEAR EVIDENCE OF INTENSE FIRE-FIGHTS.

15. MANY OF THE EVACUEES DECLARE QUITE READILY THAT THEY
WILL NEVER RETURN, THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO GO BACK TO.
ONE BELGIAN, WITH TEARS IN HIS EYES, SAID THAT HE HAD

WORKED THE PAST TWO YEARS IN KOLWEZI FOR A SUB-CONTRACTOR
FIRM, DOING WORK ON THE GECAMINES P-2 EXPANSION PROGRAM.
NOW FIVE OF HIS COMPANY'S SEVEN KOLWEZI PERSONNEL ARE
DEAD. HE SEES NO REASON TO REMAIN. MOST OF THE EVACUATION
FLIGHTS FROM KOLWEZI HEAD FOR KAMINA AND KINSHASA WITH
ONWARD CONNECTIONS TO EUROPE. FOR MOST REFUGEES THERE
HAS BEEN NO QUESTION WHETHER THEY WISH TO BOARD THESE
FLIGHTS OR WAIT FOR ONE OF THE LESS FREQUENT PLANES HEADED
FOR LUBUMBASHI.
BORG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, RESCUE OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LUBUMB00525
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780213-1231
Format: TEL
From: LUBUMBASHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780537/aaaabfaa.tel
Line Count: 303
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0166179a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2627102
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT TO KOLWEZI ON MAY 20
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, CG, FR, BE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0166179a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014